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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001641

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [UG](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: LRA UPDATE: FARDC DEPLOYMENTS, CONTACTS WITH
KAMPALA, PRETORIA, AND THE EU

REF: A. KINSHASA 1626

1B. KAMPALA 2118 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Roger Meece. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Deployments

11. (C) MONUC Divisional Commander Gen Cammaert confirmed October 1 separately to the Ambassador and PolCouns that MONUC was initiating during the weekend the transport of FARDC troops already in Aru (Ituri District, Orientale Province) to Aba (Haut-Uele District, Orientale Province) to deal with the LRA troops in the area. These troops will join others already arrived from the Ninth Military District sent by General Padiri. Other troops are en route from various points, all apparently to be routed via Aru. Cammaert told the Ambassador the deployment plan is to ferry the troops over the roughly 130 km. distance from Aru to Aba by helicopter. Trucks will attempt to deliver heavier support supplies over the "track" that remains of the road to Aba. Cammaert estimated road transport time at about 9 - 10 hours, barring breakdowns or vehicles mired in the mud.

12. (C) The Ambassador asked about supply needs for the deployed FARDC troops. Cammaert confirmed this is a serious problem, especially food rations. He indicated that he had given orders for MONUC forces to push as far as possible within their authority to ensure adequate food rations to the deployed FARDC forces. (Comment: Cammaert strongly implied that in fact MONUC would go beyond that point. Cammaert pointed out that the troops have to eat and no effective operations can be expected from starving soldiers. End comment.)

Contacts

13. (C) Presidency Ambassador-at-Large Antoine Ghonda told the Ambassador Monday morning, October 3, that GDRC representatives Presidential Private Secretary Kikaya and Ambassador-at-Large Katumba were just in Pretoria to talk with President Mbeki about the situation in northeastern DRC. According to Ghonda, Mbeki indicated that he would get in contact with Uganda President Museveni to urge, among other points, that the Tripartite mechanism be used as the primary vehicle for consultation and coordination regarding the LRA problem, as well as in regard to ADF elements and Ituri warlord militias, all on the bilateral Uganda/DRC agenda regarding northeastern DRC. That is the reason for existence of the Tripartite process. Kikaya and Katumba will go soon on to Addis Ababa for consultations with the African Union.

14. (C) Ghonda reported that a number of people in the GDRC believe that Museveni is attempting to manipulate the situation with the LRA to deflect attention from Uganda's continuing active support of warlord militias in Ituri District. In its most extreme version, this thesis holds that Museveni recognizes that the LRA troops in Aba represent little threat to Uganda. The Ambassador countered that the thesis appears misplaced. While Museveni certainly seeks to advance his own interests, he and the Kampala government generally have ample reason to consider the LRA a threat. While the LRA combatants in Aba are not/not on the Uganda border (note: Haut-Uele District borders Sudan, not Uganda. end note), the Uganda government has been pursuing a long and sustained campaign against the LRA who bear the responsibility for a great many civilian killings and suffering.

15. (C) The Ambassador encouraged Ghonda to explore direct bilateral contacts from Kinshasa with Kampala as well. In particular, it would be useful to have operational coordination between FARDC operational commanders and Ugandan commanders in charge of troops reportedly currently deployed across the border in Sudan. Ghonda took the suggestion on board. (Comment: Ref B noted that Kabila and Museveni spoke on Thursday, September 29, although Ghonda made no reference to the conversation. Cammaert told the Ambassador he had a report that General Padiri was holding a meeting with UPDF officers also during the weekend, but had no further information as to what may have been discussed, if in fact the meeting took place. End comment.)

16. (C) Comment: All GDRC contacts of the Embassy confirm that the Congolese leadership would like nothing more than to be rid of the LRA. The Congolese have deep suspicions regarding Museveni, based on the ongoing activities of the Ituri militias as well as Uganda's past involvement in northeastern DRC which produced widespread death and destruction. For the same reason, they are desperately anxious to avoid any excuse for a reentry of UPDF troops into Congolese territory. The building troop presence around Aba represents the opportunity for meaningful action, but undoubtedly as the number of FARDC troops increase, the de facto demands for MONUC support, including food, will multiply. End comment.
MEECE